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Thursday, September 25, 2003

Humbug Marsh acres to officially join refuge

Interior secretary to announce addition in Brownstown Township

By Shanteé Woodards / *The Detroit News*

U.S. Secretary of Interior Gale Norton will be in Brownstown this weekend to announce the expansion of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

Bankrupt developer Made in Detroit was ordered to sell Humbug Marsh, which is 400 acres of wetlands, to the Trust for Public Land for nearly \$5 million to satisfy creditors. The preservation group plans to donate the property to the 19-mile Detroit Refuge.

The refuge will have 1,700 acres by year-end.

"This is just to say we've got a tremendous natural resource in our back yard, let's protect it, conserve it and enjoy it," said Mike Hacker, spokesman for U.S. Rep. John Dingell, D-Dearborn. "(The Detroit International Wildlife Refuge) is just one of a handful of urban refuges in the entire country."

Made in Detroit has until today to appeal U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Marci McIvor's ruling. Company officials could not be reached for comment Wednesday. An announcement of the acquisition is expected this weekend.

Humbug Marsh is deemed one of the most environmentally significant properties in Southeast Michigan. The area, which is the last undeveloped parcel along the Detroit River, contains more species of fish and waterfowl than anywhere else in the river.

Downriver activists had long fought Made in Detroit's efforts to develop Humbug Marsh.

"The people Downriver are very excited," said Blair McGowan, an environmental activist. "It fits the grand vision of re-imaging Downriver from a smokestack community to a community that is a great place to live."

You can reach Shanteé Woodards at (734) 354-4049 or swoodards@detnews.com.



Norton

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